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ABSTRACT

The empirical and critical traditions in mass communication inquiry are examined in this paper to determine if mass communication inquiry can provide a useful perspective on human communication. The paper first describes the development of interest in mass communication in the nineteenth century, then explains the empirical research tradition in mass communication inquiry, noting its evolution from stimulus-response to audience-oriented research under Paul Lazarsfeld's influence. The paper then explores the critical research tradition, and analyzes Lee Thayer's four levels of communication in terms of Denis McQuail's seven characteristics of mass communication by using critical literature. It concludes that the critical research tradition in mass communication can provide a provocative explanation of all levels of communication, thus calling into question the usefulness of such divisions within the communication discipline as interpersonal, organizational, or mass communication. (Author/FL)

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Mass Communication as a Perspective on Human Communication: The Quandary of a Discipline

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the empirical and critical traditions in mass communication inquiry and asks whether mass communication inquiry can provide a useful perspective on human communication.

The paper first describes the development of interest in mass communication, finding its beginning in the 19th century. The paper then explains the empirical research tradition in mass communication inquiry, noting its evolution from stimulus-response to audience-oriented research, under Paul Lazarsfeld's influence.

The paper then explains the critical research tradition. The paper analyzes Lee Thayer's four levels of communication in terms of Denis McQuail's seven characteristics of mass communication by using critical literature, especially the work of Harold Innis and Jürgen Habermas.

The paper concludes that the critical research tradition in mass communication can provide a provocative explanation of all levels of communication, thus calling into question the usefulness of traditional divisions within the communication discipline, e.g., interpersonal, organizational, or mass communication.

Mass communication has been a major interest area within the communication discipline, and its study has spawned two major ways of thinking about and talking about mass communication. One of these perspectives is the American empirical tradition of quantitative research into mass communication. The other perspective, more often identified with European and Canadian scholars than with Americans, employs critical theoretical and historical analysis to assess the role and consequences of mass communication in modern society.[1]

This paper will describe the development of mass communication as a field of study and will explain how adoption of the differing perspectives leads to differing conclusions about the functions of mass communication in society.

Interest in mass communication as a social force developed in the 19th century and reflected a concern over societal instability. Social commentators, reacting to the upheavals of the French Revolution in the late 18th century and of the Industrial Revolution, criticized changes in the social structure and in patterns of authority.[2] These critics saw political power shifting from the hereditary elite to the masses, either through overt revolution as in France, or through a more gradual process of increased participation resulting from increasing literacy and economic stability, as in England and the United States.[3] They saw the fundamental shift of population from the farm to the city, with its correspondingly basic shift in how people related to each other in society. In Ferdinand Tönnies' terms, the dominant form of relationship changed from kinship to contract.[4] With these changes, they saw the

crumbling of centuries-old forms of authority: the family, the church, the hereditary elite, tradition.

Since those individuals who were in a position to be social critics also tended to be members of traditionally elite classes, their inclination was to look upon the changes occurring in the 19th century with some dismay. In the midst of upheaval, those experiencing the changes could not look upon their lives with the clear retrospective eye of the historian and know clearly what was going on.[5] Nevertheless, as people will do, they sought to make sense of their experience, to shape it into an explanation that they could understand, even if the experience itself defied understanding.

In looking about in the disarray of the 19th century for causes of social conditions, they were bound to look for highly visible phenomena, and they found one: the rise of the mass press. The emergence of the "penny press" was a genuinely spectacular occurrence.[6] Literally overnight, in 1833, the press -- once the domain of the educated and wealthy elite -- became the property of the common man.

A variety of social changes had to coalesce to allow Benjamin Day and all his imitators to mass-produce inexpensive newspapers. For instance, mass education had to reach the point that the common man could read a newspaper. People had to be packed into cities, rather than spread out over the countryside, for mass distribution through street sales to be economically feasible. Somebody had to invent the steam-powered cylinder press,[7] to allow printing of thousands of copies of a single edition of a newspaper. Transportation had to be refined to such a point that newsprint, ink, and machinery could be supplied dependably. This meant that a railroad system had to be well underway.

In other words, industrialization had already to have occurred.

Only after all these things, and more, were accomplished could the mass press become a reality. True to Hannah Arendt's analysis, however, the participants in these events could not tell, with any precision, just what was going on. What the conservative, cultured elite saw was the seemingly sudden acquisition of power by the common man, and that power seemed to emanate from the one institution that seemed to bind the masses together -- the mass press.

So, in a perverse, persistent, and -- in the words of at least one media scholar -- totally accidental identification,[8] the mass medium of the moment became the cause of the social instability of the day, rather than the result of more fundamental changes in social patterns.

Essential elements of criticisms of the mass press growing out of the identification described above are (1) concerns over its vulgarity, (2) disdain for the ability of the common man to approach the mass press critically, (3) concern for the erosion of elite culture by popular culture, (4) general concern over the supposed negative effects of the mass press on the society, the culture, and the individual.

The identification of the mass press as the cause of social instability, and the general concerns over culture and control of the common man that this identification created, have in large part shaped the course taken by mass communication inquiry in the 150 years since Benjamin Day first hit the streets of New York with his one-cent newspaper. The same elite analysis has been applied to each new mass medium as it has appeared, from mass magazines in the mid-19th century, to movies at the beginning of the 20th century, to radio in the 1920s and 1930s, to television from the 1950s to the present.[9]

It is within this general perspective of a sort of technological determinism that one must look at the development of studies of mass

communication. Dominated by a concern for effects, adopting without examination an assumption of negative effects from mass communication,[10] mass communication studies have struck a doom-and-gloom note of a society unraveling at the seams, while most Americans sit at home pacified by "I Love Lucy" or "The Dukes of Hazzard," and any remaining citizens are out mugging each other in imitation of the latest television crime drama. Within this general perspective, specific periods of study can be identified.

During the 19th century and the early 20th century, discussions of mass communication took the form of essays in philosophy and social criticism.[11]

Between the world wars one sees the beginning of empirical research in mass communication.[12] Inquiries were dominated by stimulus-response assumptions borrowed from psychology. The power of the mass media (the stimuli) to cause negative effects (the response) in the defenseless audience member was generally assumed.[13] Adolph Hitler's apparent success at controlling the German people through radio broadcasts seemed to support the stimulus-response viewpoint, and the American government began to fund mass communication research to insure that the powers of propaganda would be available to Americans as much as to Germans.

Government-funded inquiry into mass communication set the stage for the next, critical period in development of the field. Four scholars, representing the disciplines of sociology, psychology, social psychology, and political science, either directly participated in or else followed up on the War Department research. They were Paul Lazarsfeld, Carl Hovland, Kurt Lewin, and Harold Lasswell.

The efforts of these four men created a recognizable body of

scientifically respectable research about mass communication, and their research provided the foundation for development of mass communication as an independent discipline.[14]

Of these four scholars, Lasswell and Lazarsfeld have had the greatest impact on the discipline. Lasswell's work became the model for the tradition of content analysis studies so prevalent in the field, and Lasswell's verbal model of the mass communication process is lasting testimony to the strength of stimulus-response thinking within the discipline.[15]

Lazarsfeld is the father of survey research in mass communication. Lazarsfeld's contribution to the discipline is hardly limited to methodology, however. His research modified basic assumptions about effects of mass communication on audience members. A specific study marks the beginning of the contemporary period in mass communication inquiry.

Lazarsfeld and his research team set out to study the influence of the mass media on the 1940 presidential election. Underlying the research design was the familiar stimulus-response assumption that the media played some direct role in causing people to vote for particular candidates. The results surprised Lazarsfeld and his team, and changed mass communication research significantly, because the evidence did not bear out the stimulus-response assumption of direct media effects. The study was published as The People's Choice, and it contained the basic discovery that has dominated mass communication research from 1940 to today: Media don't do things to people; people do things with media.[16] This initial realization developed into the notion of the 2-step flow as a model of the mass communication process.[17] The 2-step flow suggests that information flows from the mass media to opinion leaders

within a given community. The opinion leaders then pass on the information to other individuals. The 2-step flow has been expanded to the multi-step flow and the N-step flow, reflecting the complexity of the information-dissemination process. However, central to any version of the 2-step flow model of mass communication is the notion that individuals seek out opinion leaders -- and opinion leaders seek out media products -- for purposes of their own devising, not because of any manipulation on the part of the mass communicators.

While the Lazarsfeld point of view in mass communication research is still solidly within the effects tradition and still solidly empirical in nature, it changed the emphasis of mass communication inquiry. Instead of presenting the receiver as the passive dupe of those who control mass media, Lazarsfeld's viewpoint presents the receiver as an active and critical consumer of media products. Mass communication is now understood, within the empirical research tradition, to be one thing that people attend to, among a multitude of other things in their environment to which they also attend. Furthermore, their response to mass communication products is assumed to be a function of their group, organizational, and institutional ties.[18]

The empirical research tradition described above can provide valuable lessons to the serious student of mass communication, for within that tradition one can identify the roots of popular misconceptions about mass communication. Further, the empirical tradition is distinguished as much by its limitations as by its myriad findings, for within that tradition researchers do not -- some might say <u>cannot</u>[19] -- ask certain significant questions about the consequences of mass communication.

A brief examination of these misconceptions and limitations may

suggest why some media scholars are becoming disenchanted with the empirical research tradition and are turning, instead, to the alternative approach of employing critical theoretical and historical analysis to understand the implications of mass communication for society.

One such popular misconception is the notion that mass communication is synonymous with mass media. This reduction of the mass communication process to the organizations which produce mass communication products grows out of a practical research need to find a point of reference for empirical studies. This reductionist view encourages a sender-oriented bias in mass communication inquiry and locates mass communication within relatively transitory phenomena -- media organizations as they exist at this point in time. It thus discourages viewing mass communication as a social process and identifying historically persistent and possibly generic aspects of that process.

The alternative point of view would find the significant elements of mass communication to be those that persist through time and that reach beyond media organizations to permeate other forms of communication.

A second popular misconception, related to the first, is that the term, mass media, is synonymous with the term, the technology of transmission. This is a more extreme result of the practical research need to find something to quantify, something to count. It is hard to count a process that occurs to a great extent in the privacy of people's homes, and in the deeper privacy of people's minds. Enterprising researchers have tended to solve the problem by ignoring it and counting what is countable. Technological devices are easily countable. Thus, the professional journals regularly publish detailed studies revealing the number of television sets in Bangladesh or the number of radio

receivers in the Soviet Union. These kinds of studies encourage the belief that machinery per se plays some determining role in what is, after all, a process of human communication. Further, such studies fail to appreciate that the "media" are not merely collections of machines but are instead highly complex organizations whose activities are defined in large part by their relation to other organizations in society. The misconception does not even do justice to the concept of technology, which, from its Greek root, techne, means any ". . . method involved in the production of an object or the accomplishment of an end. . . ."[20] Using this etymologically valid definition of technology, one cannot distinguish mass communication from interpersonal communication or small-group communication on technological grounds.

The empirical urge to count machines is discouraged by the alternative perspective on mass communication inquiry. The alternative view defines technology in the generic sense stated above. Technology in this sense, understood to be any method devised for the attainment of any end, is no longer easily quantifiable and is certainly not synonymous with machines designed to transmit media products. Nor is technology synonymous with the complex human organizations, the "media," which devise the methods for attaining the end, or goal, of mass communication.

A third popular misconception is that mass media content is the most important aspect of mass communication to study. This, too, is rooted in the practical research need to find something to quantify. Content studies are legitimated by Lasswell's formative influence in the discipline of mass communication and are the legacy of his pioneer work in content analysis methodology. Content studies usually contain, explicitly or implicitly, the stimulus-response assumption that

characteristics of the content have some determining influence on audience response to that content. If that assumption is absent, there is usually no conceivable reason, in mass communication research, to be interested in the characteristics of the content. (One exception to this generalization, it might be argued, would be the content study that attempted to explain something about the producers of mass media content, rather than something about the consumers of that content. While institutional and organizational constraints on content raise questions about the legitimacy of drawing any simple conclusion about the relationship between media content and media personnel, it is just as likely, as Charles Wright suggests, that content studies reflect that relationship as any relationship between content and audience, if such studies provide any evidence about either relationship.[21])

The alternative view would tend to hold some version of the assumption that meanings are in people, rather than in communication artifacts. From this point of view, content in and of itself is irrelevant, if not totally inaccessible. It only has meaning to the degree to which people invest it with meaning, and such investiture will have at least four levels of complexity: (1) the skills the individual has developed for creating meaning; (2) the number of possible meanings the individual has so far accumulated; (3) the flexibility of the meaning-creation process as practiced in, and the variety of meanings allowed by, one's reference groups; and (4) the variety of social and cultural definitions of reality available at the time.

A fourth and final misconception to be examined here is the notion that the media do things to people, for instance, cause them to be violent.

This notion is encouraged by the tendency of empirical researchers

to focus on the producers of media content, on the machinery of mass communication, and on the content of mass communication. It reflects the persistent assumption that effects of mass communication are most likely to be negative, and it reflects, also, the stimulus-response assumption deeply woven into mass communication inquiry, that audience members are passive recipients of media content who have little or no control over their destinies. The implications of Lazarsfeld's landmark study have not trickled down to the level of popular discussion, in part, perhaps, because, within the framework of the N-step flow, researchers are still stalking the wily mass communication effect. The N-step flow framework does not necessarily force researchers out of an effects orientation; all it requires is that they define effects as more subtle and more difficult to find.

The alternative perspective does not deny that effects flow from the presence of mass communication as an institution in modern society. It does tend to view the empirical tradition's definition of "effect" as trivial, since empirical researchers have tended to try to establish immediate, measurable effects of single media products on individual members of the audience. The alternative perspective is more concerned with long-term, structural, social and cultural changes resulting from the presence of mass communication in society, and the alternative perspective questions whether this kind of mass communication "effect" is amenable to empirical investigation.

Following Lazarsfeld's early distinction between the two traditions in mass communication inquiry,[22] it is fair to call what has been described here as an alternative perspective on mass communication inquiry the "critical research" tradition in mass communication. While Lazarsfeld made the distinction in 1941, it is only recently that

interest in critical research has made any headway in the United States against the empirical research tradition, which has been fed by strong support from universities, government and the mass communication industry. The renewed interest in critical research has developed roughly over the last decade in response to perceived limitations of the empirical tradition. The most general summary statement about those limitations would be that, within the empirical tradition, the methodology is determining the questions that can be asked,[23] that the questions being asked are trivial and lack any historical sensibility,[24] and that empirical methodologies (in mass communication research, primarily field surveys, content analysis, and laboratory experiments) probably cannot answer any more significant questions about mass communication.

Frustrated, mass communication scholars have returned to the forms of discussion that constituted the very beginnings of mass communication inquiry, to social philosophy, to critical historical and theoretical analyses of the role of mass communication in society. Not surprisingly, the contemporary discussion has not been strongest in the United States. Rather, it has flourished in Europe and, to some degree, in Canada.

The remainder of this paper will utilize some of this critical literature to present a critical interpretation of mass communication in contrast to the dominant empirical tradition outlined above. The issue to be examined in this analysis is the question whether mass communication can be conceived of as some singular phenomenon separable from other forms of communication or whether, conversely, mass communication might legitimately be conceived of as a generic perspective on all social communication.

The analysis will divide communication into four "levels," in order

to examine how mass communication might be conceived of as a perspective on social communication. The four levels[25] and their social aspects are:

1. The intrapersonal level. This level conceptualizes the act of making sense of one's world and the act of thinking. This level is social inasmuch as the world one makes sense of is a social world,[26] the meanings one develops to make sense of that world are part of an ongoing social process of coming to agreement in action with one's fellows, and one's internal conversations about that world (one's thoughts) reflect the social conversations one has had.[27]

2. The interpersonal level. This level conceptualizes the phenomenon of two human beings mutually engaging in the creation of meaning. The process may be engaged in to achieve some goal, or it may be engaged in for its own sake. As with the intrapersonal level, the interpersonal level is social in that it reflects the consequences of existing as a social (associated) and symbol-using animal, one pertinent consequence being that each person brings to the process a fund of acquired meanings. The process is also social in that it is the creation of common meanings, which may be achieved only through the re-creation of existing meanings held by either party or by both parties.

Obviously, the interpersonal and intrapersonal functions operate together. They are separated from each other here only for the purposes of analysis.

3. The enterprise level. Any time humans form or enter into agreements to work together toward some formal goal, more or less explicit, the enterprise level has been reached. Any organization -- from the family to the corporation to the political state -- is an enterprise relationship.

This level is social in that it contains elements of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. In addition, it requires establishment of formal processes for the creation of meaning and offers "roles" whose meaning is historically defined -- at least partially. The enterprise is social in that its forms are developed through communicative processes, exist in people's minds (i.e., in their fund of possible meanings), and will persist as patterns of activity whether or not specific individuals remain in them. Individual participants are interchangeable and dispensable.

4. The technological level. This category scheme utilizes the broad definition of technology derived from the Greek techne. Consequently, the technology of communication becomes ". . . all the means by which the functions and ends of communication are served or carried out."[28]

Technology, then, is more than television cameras and printing presses. It includes languages and culturally persistent ways of conducting communicative acts. Speech itself is a technology.

This level conceptualizes the phenomenon of the purely communicational reality,[29] one which exists only because humans have created its meaning. The technological level is synonymous with culture in the broadest sense of that term.

The four levels here distinguished are conceptual categories for thinking about communication. All contain elements of every other and none can exist independently of the others. In this sense, the four levels combine to form the socio-cultural system, the web of culture, social institutions and interpersonal relationships in which the individual human being exists and without which the individual -- as a human being -- could not exist.

The concept of mass communication can provide a provocative and heuristically productive perspective on the phenomenon of human communication. To demonstrate this assertion, the discussion below will first present a conceptual scheme for understanding mass communication and will then use that scheme to interpret the various levels of communication distinguished above.

The conceptual scheme to be employed will be Denis McQuail's characteristics of mass communication as understood within the context of a "massness" continuum.[30]

McQuail distinguishes seven characteristics typical of the phenomenon usually described as "mass" communication. He then suggests that particular examples of mass communication activity can be located along a continuum, from "most mass" (those examples containing the greatest number of characteristics to the greatest degree) to "least mass" (those examples containing fewer of the characteristics and to a lesser degree).

The characteristics McQuail distinguishes are described below:

1. The mass communication audience is a collectivity unique to modern society in that its members share a common focus of interest and common behaviors and yet are only loosely organized, if organized at all. The audience per se has no common identity and no leadership.

2. Mass communication products are directed towards large audiences for the purpose of maximizing profit for the producer. "Large" does not have an empirical limit; rather, "large" is relative to the size of audiences for other communication artifacts and relative to the number of communicators.

3. The audience to which mass communication products are directed is heterogeneous, as a result of both audience size and relatively open

access to media products.

4. The relationship between mass communicators and audience members is impersonal. Each knows the other only in his or her formal role as communicator or as audience member.

5. Complex, formal organizations are necessary in mass communication, because the process of creating communication artifacts requires cooperative effort, financial control, internal allocation of authority for management purposes, and some mechanism of accountability to external authority. The cooperative effort is a highly structured and conventional one.

6. The content of mass communication -- the artifacts created -- is public in the sense that it is available to all who want it. Distribution of artifacts is relatively unstructured. No formal control is exercised over access to content.

7. The artifact can be available at the same time to large numbers of people widely separated both from the source and from each other. McQuail characterizes this as "simultaneity of contact."[31]

Specific examples of communication activities can be placed along the massness continuum, as was explained above. McQuail suggests that, at this time, only commercial national broadcasting allows all of the characteristics to be maximized. Therefore, it can be described as the "most mass" of mass communication.[32] However, broadcast technology can be integrated into communication processes that do not fall within McQuail's conceptual scheme (e.g., closed-circuit instructional television). Consequently, one result of this conceptual scheme is that it does not define mass communication by the media utilized. Nor does this conceptual scheme find specific message content to be significant. Nor does this scheme present audience members as passive recipients of media

content. The audience is a participant in the mass communication process, and its attention to the particular artifacts produced by mass communication organizations cannot be explained by the nature of the organizations themselves. McQuail suggests that explanations for audience behavior lie, instead, at what this analysis has described as the technological level of communication. He writes, ". . . this alliance of different foci of interest is determined by the existing structure of society and by the prevailing expectations, motivations and social institutions."[33]

The next step in determining the relationship between "mass" communication and other kinds of communication is to examine the four levels of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, enterprise, and technological) in light of the seven characteristics of mass communication, specific examples of which should be understood as arrayed along a continuum.

The first characteristic on which to focus will be the description of the mass communication audience as unique to modern society. The question to be considered is whether this uniqueness is peculiar to mass communication situations, or whether this characteristic is a more generic phenomenon of modern society.

At the meta-level of the socio-cultural system, several explanations have been advanced which suggest that the characteristics attributed to the modern mass communication audience are in fact symptomatic of all members of advanced industrial societies.

The modern audience is characterized, one should recall, as continually shifting in composition and attention. It has no stability of attention or of composition over time, historically.

Harold Innis offers an analysis for generalizing this description

from mass communication audiences to modern man. To the extent that Innis' theory is persuasive, it suggests that the crucial characteristics of the audience may not be a result of mass communication, but may reflect, instead, some more generic characteristic of modern society.

Innis offers a theory for analysis of the relationship between communication technology and social organization.[34] In short, Innis presents communication technology as the organizing device in human society. He divides communication technology into two categories -- those that are oral and those that are literate.

Oral media, such as speech, are ephemeral, perishable, cannot be transported, and contain limited capacity for information storage. As a result, societies organized around oral media (e.g., ancient Greece) are small in physical size, concerned with preservation of history and culture through poetic devices (e.g., analogy, metaphor, and repetition), require members to meet often to orally remember their history, and tend to be oriented toward theological and ethical modes of knowing, because the function of passing on the culture tends to be appropriated by the priests.

The nature of the oral medium necessitates a concern for the preservation of history; so continuity over time becomes a cultural characteristic. The audience for communication is relatively small, because of the limitations of the technology, and attention is continually focused on a common and specific goal.

The "audience" for communication in Innis' oral culture seems to have characteristics exactly opposite those of the mass communication audience described above. It should not be surprising to discover that the audience for communication in Innis' literate culture displays characteristics very similar to those of the mass communication audience.

Furthermore, recalling the massness continuum, the audience displays those characteristics to a greater degree as the technology of literacy is more completely integrated into the fabric of the culture.

The literate media, for example, the alphabet, and paper, introduced into oral cultures a competing mode of knowing. Ease of transporting the new technology allowed for the conquest of space, changing government from the small integrated community to the expansionist military state administering a central government over vast distances. With the expansionism of literate technology, influence within the society shifted from the priests to the soldiers and the bureaucrats. With the increased capacity for information storage provided by the new technologies, concern for history -- and thus for continuity over time -- decreased, and the secular concerns of bureaucracy replaced the sacred concerns of the priests. With a loss of ethical concerns came a growth of interest in efficiency of administration. As literate technologies became increasingly complex, the expert in their use became the new controller of knowledge in society. With the knowledge of the culture committed to records and stored in increasingly inaccessible technologies, the average member of a culture had to look to the expert for information. The nature of literate technology as represented by the alphabet favored sequential acquisition of information, as opposed to the repetitious and circular acquisition of information favored by the poetic devices of the oral culture.

As literate media have conquered oral media, the modern "audience" for communication has emerged. No longer possessing the knowledge of his culture and history himself, the audience member must depend on the experts to inform him of it. With little concern for continuity over time, he is a creature of the present. With a habit of sequential

information acquisition, he moves from one expert source to another. As the literate society grows over space and adopts militaristic forms of social control, the importance of and the possibility for community decrease, since the dominant communication technologies no longer encourage its growth or contain a need for a community structure.

Thus, in Innis' cultural analysis, the "audience" for communication in a literate culture emerges as a mass with no need for community and no habit of continuing attention. While mass communication audiences display these characteristics, because the media of mass communication are literate technologies devoted to control of space rather than of time, the literate mode of knowing is a much more deeply embedded phenomenon in modern society. For Innis, it is the organizing concept -- common to modern man -- and explains not just mass communication audiences but all modern patterns of interaction, since these patterns are determined by the dominant communication technology. That these patterns are unique to modern society is clear, for modern society is a literate society.

Innis' analysis suggests the possibility that the description of the mass communication audience is attached to the media simply by virtue of the visibility of the media. A more comprehensive explanation might attach the audience characteristics to some more fundamental characteristics of the socio-cultural system in its "modern" form, as Innis' analysis does.

Another meta-level perspective which permits this interpretation is offered by Jürgen Habermas, a member of the Frankfurt School of critical social theory. Reminiscent of Innis' analysis, Habermas' perspective considers the problem whether conditions for the creation of comunity life are encouraged by the socio-cultural system. Habermas'

inquiry is significant to this discussion of mass communication because the lack of community may account for those characteristics which are found to be significant in the mass communication audience. The persuasiveness of Habermas' theory could lead to the assertion that these "massness" characteristics are pervasive in the society and attributable -- not to the mass media -- but to more generic characteristics of the socio-cultural system.

With Habermas, one needs to look no further into history than the 1700s for an explanation of the "massness" of modern society. At the level of the socio-cultural system, the chance for the "common man" to generate common interests was never better than in the 18th century. Without historical precedent, an institution which could secure common interests for the masses emerged: the public sphere.[35] Structurally situated between the modern state on the one hand, and a society of private interests on the other hand, the public sphere took its place in the history of institutions as the embodiment of democratic ideals: that members of the society could and would coalesce into a communication-community of reasoned discourse in order to reach consensus about matters of generalized interest, that private interests would be subordinated to collective interests, and that the state would function only as the executor of the collective will.

Promising signs that such ideals could be realized included the enactment of regulations in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the newly formed United States that state proceedings be made public, the development of the party press in Europe and America, the French and American revolutions and constitutions which established as legitimate the right to free expression, truth, and justice -- all of these events having been produced by a public sphere in the process of forming itself

in societies on the brink of the modern period. While the ideal of the communication-community could be traced back to the ancient Greek polis, it was not until the 18th century that it became structurally available to members of society other than the political ruling class -- first, to the merchant classes, later, to the reading public of party newspapers, and, in the 19th century, to the first generations who had attended public schools.

These signs of the institutionalization of a communication-community so far suggest a modern period in which the members of society would be characterized by homogeneity, not heterogeneity, and by familiarity through shared sentiments and interests, not anonymity. Moreover, the story of the modern society would appear as the progressive extension of the communication-community to the point that all members of the modern society would be full participants. Such a narrative would, at the very least, place society itself on the weak end of the massness continuum.

However, the chance that the masses could form into a communication-community was an opportunity deflected by still other events -- events which led 19th-century scholars to speak in polar opposites. The Industrial Revolution marked the end of traditional society and displayed the features of modern society. A socio-cultural system wherein "all people are united in spite of all dividing factors" gave way to one wherein "all people are divided in spite of all uniting factors," wrote the sociologist Tönnies.[36] Emile Durkheim coined the terms mechanical and organic solidarity, characterizing the latter as the division and interconnection of labor -- hallmarks of the modern period.[37] Events generally associated with the Industrial Revolution led Max Weber to coin terms which today are familiar, both in word and

experience: bureaucracy and charisma.[38]

Because of these changes, modern man, for such scholars, seemed destined to live in a socio-cultural system at the strongest end of the massness continuum. Not only were the members of modern society heterogeneous. They had become alienated from their fellows; anonymity, with this observation, no longer just characterizes an occasional experience in modern society -- it characterizes the experience of modern society.

Habermas' discussion of the public sphere is informed by this literature on the industrialization of modern society. His history of the public sphere, as a result, takes on the theme that the formation of community has been increasingly frustrated, systematically, for nearly two centuries. By the mid-20th century, the public sphere had been so weakened by industrialization processes that it now must be "arduously constructed case by case."[39] Where once there was the prospect that the life of society would be determined by reasoned discourse aimed at consensus, now society has a life of its own, "so to speak, over the head of public discourse."[40] Habermas' conclusion, then, is that the public sphere is impotent, and systematically so. Its role today is to provide acclamation to decisions made outside its purview.

Whether such conclusions deserve to be so strongly drawn is the subject of contemporary social theory and critical-historical approaches to mass communication inquiry. Nevertheless, Habermas has made the compelling case for conceptualizing communication under democratic criteria. Moreover, such an approach to communication permits an analysis of modern society not only in terms of its history, but also in terms of its possible future: for, while the public sphere may survive as a remnant of recent cultural tradition, its history hasn't yet been played out.

Innis and Habermas are but two of several scholars whose work reminds us that characteristics of the mass communication audience are characteristics of the modern socio-cultural system. With this reminder, one can recognize that the qualities of large numbers, heterogeneity, and anonymity characterize the customers of General Motors as much as the readers of Newsweek, the users of Idaho Power's electricity as much as the viewers of CBS programs, the clients of social services as much as the listeners of National Public Radio. In short, these qualities refer to systematic features of modern society at large. Considered from this standpoint alone, then, to focus upon communication is to study mass phenomena of a socio-cultural system, whose several institutions have required the supply of subsystems sometimes called "audiences," sometimes "clients," sometimes "customers," sometimes "markets." Innis and Habermas, writing without knowledge of one another, together underscore the point that communication is never less than a historical phenomenon, that communication has emerged as part of the evolution of social systems into mass societies whose members are "divided in spite of all uniting factors." In such societies, the term "mass communication" is redundant, which is to say that no level of communication in modern life is unrelated to the requirement for an audience and the qualities of largeness, heterogeneity, and anonymity.

When one moves from the meta-level of the socio-cultural system to the technological level of communication, an analysis of technology[41] in terms of McQuail's characteristics of mass communication again suggests the logic of generalizing the characteristics from "mass" communication to all forms of communication.

At the technological level, an audience is a means for the realization of ends. For modern societies, audiences have become requirements

for the social system: GM needs its "audience" to carry out its profit-making purposes, as does CBS. Even the public sphere, it turns out, has become a technology for the supply of legitimacy to public programs.[42] This requirement sets up problems of what Innis called "administration" over spatial distances; while one may readily note that print and broadcast technologies help to solve this problem, that does not suggest the conclusion that these literate technologies encourage the creation of a communication-community. In Innis' theory, the relation of the oral tradition (favoring community) to the literate tradition (favoring the mass audience) is more than simple opposition. The dominant tradition can not merely pre-empt but actually transform the subordinate tradition. At one time, writing retained what might be called "the logic of speech," when the oral tradition was recorded in writing. But the modern period has reversed the situation, and this is the less-trivial point: Speech today obeys the logic of print, as scholars from Innis, to Marshall McLuhan, to Walter Ong, to James Carey have shown.[43] As Hans Magnus Enzensberger suggests, the administered world, via the industrialization of mind, is total.[44]

At the technological level, then, communication reflects characteristics of the mass society. Technologies like speech, print, and broadcast serve largely administrative functions between and among societal subsystems, while audiences, themselves technologies for still other audiences, supply the criteria by which to manipulate speech, print, broadcast, etc. Heterogeneity of the social system demands the malleability of the spoken and the written, while the demand for larger audiences (or "more customers," etc.) values the anonymity and impersonality of the mass. Such contradictions are said by critical theorists like Max Horkheimer to be guaranteed by an instrumental-technical

rationality, a rationality symptomatic of the times.[45]

Such contradictions outline the arrangements between social institutions, routines of relationships which have come to prevail but which must persistently be managed in this century. At the enterprise level, the generic problem has become the organization and management of audiences.

At the interpersonal level, it has become fashionable for some communication researchers to describe interpersonal communication instrumentally, adopting exchange models once employed by traditional mass communication researchers.[46] Whether one agrees with such renditions or not makes little difference in the face of mounting evidence, supplied by sociologists like McQuail, that the numbers in the middle class have been increasing, and that this, combined with their higher levels of training/education, has for some time created the persistent problem of dealing with strangers on a regular, even daily, basis.[47] Anonymity, not intimacy, is systematically problematic. Attached to these trends are the increasing demands that public school students acquire what the sociolinguist Basil Bernstein labeled "elaborated codes," languages of abstraction (mathematics, computer literacy, the written word) which encourage individuals to move during their biographies from familiar group ties through a series of different groups.[48] In light of observations like these, researchers who view interpersonal communication in terms of social exchange may be part of the problem so far as humanistically oriented scholars are concerned; however, the problem is not likely to be of their own making -- in fact, they may be on to something, perhaps without knowing it. What they report is not so much a need to remove the anonymity of a communication partner, but the need to manage the person toward some end: the administered world has

reached the interpersonal level.

How it might be possible for the administered world of modern society to characterize interpersonal communication is a question for which the Chicago School of symbolic interactionism provides a powerful argument. Ever since George Herbert Mead's Mind, Self, and Society,[49] scholars have recognized that communication processes are socialization processes. A key concept here is Mead's "generalized other," a constellation of roles and meanings available in the socio-cultural system that have been adopted by an individual. One learns these roles and adopts meanings through people with whom the individual, in the process of growing up, has regular, meaningful contact. In this way, interpersonal relationships become media for integrating society and individual.

As Mead puts it, "social or group attitudes are brought within the individual's field of direct experience, and are included as elements in the structure . . . of his self"; through this process, the self becomes "an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behavior" in which all are involved.[50] For modern societies, Mead pointed out, abstract, relatively anonymous social groups -- for example, "the class of debtors and the class of creditors"[51] -- determine the nature of the self at least as much as do concrete social groups, like the family.

Mead thus provides an account of the interpenetration of levels: the self is wedded to even the most abstract, anonymous elements of society by means of any form of concrete contact between and among individuals. The generalized other turns out to consist of a wide variety of anonymous and familiar groups -- a large and heterogeneous audience for the self which at the same time constitutes the self. The thesis that society is "in" all levels of communication, then, is a way of

illustrating the interpenetration of levels. It is a thesis which provides an approach to understanding how the characteristics of a mass society are reproduced even at the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels of communication.

Considering the intrapersonal level, Mead's analysis suggests that communication with oneself appears, upon closer examination, to be a conversation of shared symbols. A crucial question here, and one not settled by Mead or other interactionists, is whether one's identity can develop beyond literally conventional meanings and roles into what Habermas calls a "post-conventional" identity -- an identity which is more than a collection of socio-cultural ideas and meanings, an identity which transcends such roles and meanings, a self which can critically evaluate those roles and meanings.[52] The possibility for the development of this free, autonomous, post-conventional self depends on the potentials supplied by cultural tradition. Cultural traditions can "offer and stimulate the transition to a post-conventional identity, or hold the restructuring of role identity at the conventional level."[53] To the extent that the second option fits the nature of the modern socio-cultural system, one's communication with oneself has the paradoxical result of arresting further development of the self. Put differently, intrapersonal communication, like interpersonal communication, becomes an arena for large, heterogeneous, and anonymous groups; as such, intrapersonal communication is a mechanism for perpetuating mass phenomena.

Thus far in this paper, the socio-cultural system and the levels of communication have been discussed in terms of elements of the massness continuum. The element of <u>the mass audience unique to modern society</u> was applied developmentally, as a characteristic of the entire

socio-cultural system; this was explained through the historical analyses advanced by Innis and Habermas. Taking the modern socio-cultural system as the background, the paper next considered each level of communication in terms of these elements of massness: large, heterogeneous, anonymous audiences. While the degree of applicability is an open question, the relevance of these characteristics to each level of communication has been established through research and theory focusing on the roles each level of communication plays for the socio-cultural system. Audiences serve as technologies for sub-systems of economic activity, for modern democratic relationships between state and society, and for socializing and integrating the individual into society. Other levels of communication -- interpersonal and intrapersonal -- take on technological roles of socialization and integration, in the process reproducing the heterogeneity, largeness, and anonymity associated with mass audiences. From the discussion of the massness continuum, the picture emerges of the technologizing of all levels of communication. With this picture in mind, the remaining elements of the massness continuum -- the requirement of complex and formal organizations, of publicness, and of simultaneity of contact -- will be examined.

Complex, formal organizations are considered to be required for "mass" communication. This requirement followed logically from the realization that modern society was emerging as a complex system of institutions which interrelated functionally.[54] The modern society thus came to be viewed as a system of subsystems, linked by formal networks of communication. This systems perspective on the nature of modern society has emphasized problems of mutual interdependence of all subsystems of society. As a result, problems of communication between and among subsystems took center stage both for research and for everyday

activities.

In particular, the complexity and interdependence of subsystems in society has required that subsystems formalize into organizations which focus on the maintenance of interdependence. Thayer takes this problem as a warrant for inserting another level above the enterprise level, that of the "enterprise-environment interface." He writes, ". . . what must be organized are capacities for creating, maintaining, altering, or utilizing [relationships] between the enterprise and its relevant environmental domains."[55] As a result, technologies for organization at this interface are of vital practical interest. Failure to manage the interdependence of subsystems like the state and the economic system, for example, threatens the survival of the whole system. Since no single subsystem is positioned to manage interdependency throughout complex societies, such societies have a structural tendency to be crisis-ridden.[56] While this tendency may be the stuff of the nightly newscast, it results from complexity, a characteristic of mass phenomena which in no sense is monopolized by enterprises called "news organizations."

The requirement for complex, formal organizations, then, is built into the structure of modern society, now conceived of and experienced as a system of interdependent subsystems. This requirement accentuates the technological level of communication as it bears upon the enterprise level: enterprises, now conceived of as subsystems, depend on the strength of technologies for managing interdependence. Whether such technologies are sufficiently developed is, at best, an unsettled question.

At the interpersonal level, complexity takes the form of the organization of oneself in relation to another. More precisely, complexity at this level is the organization of a conception of oneself, the

organization of a conception of another, and the organization of a conception of the relationship between selves. The discussion of Mead's concept, the generalized other, should recall that the formation of the generalized other entails (1) the awareness of one's place in situations of complexity, (2) the assertion that interpersonal relationships are necessarily more than relationships between two people (or between or among any specified number, for that matter), and (3) the arrangement and synthesis of societal roles and meanings.

At the intrapersonal level as well as at the interpersonal level, the generalized other amounts to a formal organization of meanings and roles. This is precisely what allows one to speak of a self which has an identity.

The impetus toward formal organization in this sense appears, again, to be complexity. Sociologists articulate this when they characterize the internalization of roles as an active appropriation of society by the individual, thus echoing Mead. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis emphasized systematically failed attempts to employ the social reality of the external world in order to control the unknown but deeply felt complexities of inner nature. Social philosophers like Dewey took the complexity of communication still another direction, seeing there the conditions for the experience that "no person remains unchanged,"[57] that the individual is shaped and reshaped by his interactions with others.

At the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels, complexity and the organization for it come to persist as daily and life-long problems for the child of mass society. The degree of formalization required reaches, first, to the competence to acquire a language by which to make order and, thus, meaning from complexity. Secondly, the competence to

employ language analytically is also a necessary, formal response to the problem of organizing for complexity. The inability to perform either is a condition found in psychotics, whose experience is the fragmentation of attempts to handle complexity via language and via the analytic use of language.[58]

Formal organization, then, appears as a requirement for all levels of communication, even for the level of communication with oneself, where an "insurance policy" against psychosis is most pressing. If one is interested in the strength of that insurance policy, and if "Psychosis is the final outcome of all that is wrong with a culture,"[59] then all levels of communication require attention in terms of their roles in facilitating or frustrating acquisition of the competence to make and evaluate meaning. If the structure of all levels of communication is systematically deformed, as Habermas suggests,[60] then the matter of psychosis is more than an object of separate or fanciful inquiry. It becomes, instead, a matter of immediate concern to the student of human communication.

The characteristic of publicness will now be applied to each level, this time, not only to demonstrate that an element of the massness continuum is relevant to each level of communication, but also to explore something of the significance for finding mass-like qualities at each level. One way of exploring the matter of significance is to include a question about the health of communication in modern society, which the example of psychosis poses.

The discussion of complexity and formal organization highlighted the interdependence of all subsystems, or levels. The element of publicness highlights themes of availability of communication systems to the members of society. In one sense, all levels of communication are

"public" or "available" in that, even at the intrapersonal level, others are participants in communication. In another sense, some levels are less available than are others. Access is stratified, for instance, by economic resources to buy computer information systems for the consumption of news, or to buy a broadcasting facility, and by one's place in the social hierarchy, which limits access to enterprises and individuals in the society.[61] In yet another sense, all levels of communication entail "publicness" in the degree to which shared meanings are capable of being made into themes of discourse, discussion, and debate, so that decisions and actions result from deliberation.[62]

At the system level, the ability of society's members to form into a community of discourse, discussion, and debate has been altered with the transformation of the public sphere, a matter discussed earlier in this paper. The decline of opportunity to form a communication-community at the system level parallels the growth of complexity, the proliferation of specialization. As was noted earlier, participation has yielded to acclamation; available meanings are not matters of public deliberations from which policies are made.

At the technological level, it has been noted that modern technologies of communication tend to obey the logic of literate culture (e.g., speech now obeys the logic of print). One implication is that communication-communities, if ever they do form, are limited by their technologies to the present. In such a situation, continuity over time of the communication-community is unlikely at best. A public sphere must, then, be constructed case by case.

At the levels of the socio-cultural system and technology, the case can be made that conditions for psychosis -- the inability to make or evaluate meaning -- are, at this point in the history of modern

society, structurally encouraged and nearly inevitable.

At the enterprise level of communication, the success or failure of enterprises is tied to their relationships to other enterprises and to the relevant aspects of their environment.[63] Thus, conditions of the system as a whole become relevant at the enterprise level. Should subsystems of enterprises attempt to form communication-communities, system and technological characteristics encourage the frustration of the effort. Moreover, enterprises vary widely according to goals. The goals of a university, for example, are not the goals of a corporation, although universities may at times appear to be taking on corporate characteristics. Specialization encourages attention to enterprise goals over the realization of goals shared among different enterprises, favoring competing interests over the generalizable interest.[64]

The interpersonal level, too, is affected by the fragmenting of the modern, mass society. Creation of a communication-community is fragmented here, too, by the technology of literate culture. It is also frustrated by the requirement of performing several roles in fragmented ways, a situation with which nearly every individual can identify. For example, the "parent" enters the private world of the "commuter" at 7:30 a.m., becomes a "wage-laborer" at 8:30 a.m., a "student" at 11:40 a.m., a "consumer" at 12:30, an "employee" again at 1:30 p.m., and "family member", or "loner," or "lover," or "friend" at day's end. What is popularly known as "the treadmill" is the product of society since industrialization, and it is a systematic condition in modern life which frustrates the making and evaluation of meaning. Publicness at the interpersonal level has, as a result, an anonymous quality.

Christopher Lasch argues that modern culture encourages attention mostly on the self, and less on society, social institutions, or other

people.[65] It is a psychotic attention which is encouraged, the psychosis of narcissism. Its symptoms include: conformity to social norms out of fear, while resenting such conformity in oneself and others; lack of interest in the future or the past; difficulty in internalizing happy experiences with others so that the experiences can be lasting; and fierce competition for approval and acclaim while seeking to destroy the conditions making competition possible.[66] Such conflicts suggest a modern personality incapable of making, to say little of evaluating, meaning. Such conflicts can be explained by reading the works of the symbolic interactionists, the sociologists of knowledge, and the social philosophers, but their significance for the intrapersonal level suggests other works, like Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents.[67] At the intrapersonal level, making oneself public to oneself is not, for many scholars of communication and human nature, a problem to be resolved in one session with a therapist, or in one's lifetime.

The critical-historical perspective on mass communication takes the condition of publicness as here described to be a condition of weakened health, at best. This condition appears through each level of the communication system as part of the broader perspective of the evolution of socio-cultural systems. Lessons to be drawn from this perspective are, primarily, lessons of the diffusion of mass phenomena throughout society and its communication systems at all levels. These are lessons of some urgency. Whether this generation and future generations become able to systematically form communication-communities at any level of communication is a matter on the agenda of critical researchers of mass communication.

Prospects for communication as the formation of community life are not entirely bleak. Habermas has shown that the conditions for creating

community are universally built into everyday language.[68] Every utterance is also an invitation to discuss the truth of what is said. Every utterance is also an invitation to discuss the truthfulness of the parties involved. Every utterance is an invitation to discuss the appropriateness of the subject matter. To the extent that ordinary language is reproduced through all levels of communication and throughout modern society, invitations to these themes of community interest are announced. In this sense, the final element on the massness continuum -- simultaneity of contact -- applies throughout the communication system.

It would be folly to suggest that the prospect for the formation of communication-communities is a minor problem. One would have to ignore the nature of modern socio-cultural systems, the evolution of technologies as a factor in culture, and the interdependence of groups and individuals in a web of mass phenomena. One would have to ignore such matters in order to suggest that all is well with human communication, or to suggest that all is even "fixable." In such ignorance, overly optimistic conceptions of communication and of society either prematurely proclaim a renaissance of community life or, perhaps worse, foreclose the chance to regard communication as a process of creating community.

Summary and Conclusions

The analysis just completed above supports the conclusion that the characteristics commonly attributed only to mass communication instead pervade all levels of communication in modern life. The analysis is one example of a critical theoretical approach representative of one of the two competing traditions which have developed within the discipline of mass communication.

Such an analysis contrasts sharply with both the method and the conclusions about the import of mass communication common to the empirical research tradition within the discipline.

In order to present and explain the two traditions in mass communication study, this paper first sketched the history of the development of interest in mass communication, finding the roots of that interest in 19th century concern over fundamental changes in the social structure. These changes resulted primarily from the Industrial Revolution, but also from political changes in Western nations which led to increased participation of the common man in the political system. The rise of the masses coincided with technological developments allowing the mass distribution of communication artifacts. An identification between the two developments was made, and a persistent concern over the effects of mass communication on society resulted.

The empirical research tradition began after World War I. It was informed both by the general expectation of negative effects from mass communication and by stimulus-response theory borrowed from psychology. The initial assumption was that media products had direct effects on isolated audience members. Research supported by the U.S. War Department prior to and during American participation in World War II encouraged, through direct or indirect sponsorship, four social scientists -- Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Lewin and Hovland -- whose work formed the foundation for the independent discipline of mass communication. Research in 1940 by Lazarsfeld failed to find evidence supporting stimulus-response assumptions about media and led to a fundamental shift in perspective for the empirical tradition, from the assumption that media do something to audiences to the assumption that audience members actively and critically attend to mass communication for purposes of their own and within

the contexts of their group, organizational and institutional relationships. These relationships are understood to mediate any mass communication effects which might occur.

The empirical tradition employs quantitative research methods, especially field surveys, content analyses, and laboratory experiments, and it is primarily concerned with finding mass communication effects. The empirical tradition is most closely identified with American scholars in mass communication.

The empirical tradition has been criticized because it lacks historical perspective and because it allows available methodology to dictate research questions. Critics say that empirical researchers ignore significant questions because those questions cannot be answered using empirical methods, and that empirical research lacks any theoretical framework.

Standing in opposition to the empirical tradition is the critical research tradition in mass communication. Using theoretical and historical analysis, critical researchers attempt to explain the long-term structural relationship between mass communication and society. The critical research tradition is closely identified with European scholars. This tradition has been criticized by advocates of the empirical tradition as lacking any empirical verification of its assertions and as being too theoretical.

In demonstrating the critical research tradition, the paper provided a conceptual framework utilizing, first, Thayer's four levels of communication, culminating in the meta-level of the socio-cultural system, and, second, McQuail's seven characteristics of mass communication as they appear along his massness continuum.

The paper then analyzed the communication levels in terms of the

mass communication characteristics, employing some of the critical research literature, especially the work of Innis and Habermas. The analysis attempted to answer the question whether mass communication is a kind of communication separable from other forms of communication, or whether mass communication might be a legitimate perspective for discussing all forms of communication. The latter conclusion would call into question the usefulness of the divisions that have grown up within the discipline of communication, e.g., interpersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication, mass communication. The critical analysis concluded that what is labeled as a "mass communication" perspective can indeed provide useful explanations of communication phenomena at all conceptual levels, that mass communication does not cause, but only reflects, the "massness" endemic to modern society, and that the problem facing communication scholars is the systematic frustration of the creation of communication-communities.

In comparing the two research traditions in mass communication, one could predict that the discipline would be less divided if those within the empirical tradition would worry about the paucity of theory available to explain their research findings, and if those within the critical tradition would make serious attempts to empirically verify their theoretical analyses. Such a union is unlikely to occur, however, because the critical tradition is just that -- <u>critical</u> of any established institutions, technologies and power centers. (So crucial is the "critical" in the term "critical research tradition" that, if the critical tradition ever became dominant in mass communication inquiry, it would logically have to criticize its own success.) By contrast, the empirical research tradition grows out of established power centers. (Remember that the U.S. War Department was one midwife at the birth of

the discipline.) It depends for its survival on a continuing flow of research funds from government, universities, and the communication industry. For either tradition to embrace the other would require each to deny its own internal logic.

As a result, mass communication inquiry has a split personality. On the one hand are mountains of empirical research data which examine short-term effects of specific communication artifacts on specific individuals, suggesting that the role of mass communication in society is to persuade specific individuals to do specific things -- for good or ill.

On the other hand are critics who argue that the empirical researchers are not even asking the right questions, that any theory of mass communication must necessarily require and reflect a theory of society, which must necessarily be a theory of human communication, and that the future of human communication may be dim.

Which tradition ought to be heeded is a question for the serious student to ponder and to decide.

Notes

[1] The two perspectives correspond to Paul Lazarsfeld's distinction between critical and administrative research in communication, and to Hanno Hardt's distinction between critical-intellectual and administrative-bureaucratic views on mass communication. See Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, "Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research," Studies in Philosophy and Social Science, 9 (1941), 2-26; and Hanno Hardt, Introduction to Social Theories of the Press: Early German and American Perspectives (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979). See also Dallas W. Smythe, "Some Observations on Communication Theory," Audiovisual Communication Review, 12 (1954), 24-37.

[2] See, e.g., Ferdinand Tönnies, Community and Society, originally published in 1887, translated and edited by Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1963); Gustave LeBon, The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind, originally published in 1895 (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969); and Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, translated by George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1964).

[3] See, e.g., Raymond Williams, The Long Revolution (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1966); and Fredrick S. Siebert, Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1952).

[4] Tönnies, pp. 37, 71.

[5] Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 191-192.

[6] The term "penny press" refers to the price of the newspaper to the reader, one cent. When the one-cent newspaper first appeared during the depression of 1833, it became popular with "the immigrant masses who could not afford six cents." John Tebbel, The Media in America (New York: New American Library, Mentor Book, 1974), p. 182. The first of the penny papers was The New York Sun, published by Benjamin Day. Tebbel writes, ". . . the paper was an instantaneous success, hawked in the streets by newsboys, the first of their kind in America. In six months, the Sun had a circulation of 8000." Ibid.

[7] Tebbel writes, "Few inventions have so influenced American life as the advent of the steam-powered cylinder press, with the consequent use of stereotyped plates and cheaper methods of making paper and bindings. These devices opened the door to the mass market." Ibid., p. 116.

The importance of these technological developments cannot be overstated. The first major change in printing technology since Gutenberg ". . . came in the second decade of the 1800s with the substitution of a cylinder for the platen. A revolving cylinder picked up sheets of paper, held them tight around its circumference, and carried them over

a moving-type bed. The cylinder and moving bed were steam powered, which made faster press delivery possible. This development probably could not have come sooner, since before this time the making of paper was a slow, tedious hand process. The first practical papermaking machines were introduced in the early 1800s." Arthur T. Turnbull and Russell N. Baird, The Graphics of Communication, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), p. 15.

[8] The sense that a mass society was emerging "gained new strength from the developments in the technology of communication, which were called 'mass communications,' before their association with mass society occurred. Yet the accident of similar designation has facilitated the fusion of the criticism of the intellectual and cultural content of press, wireless, and television with the apprehension about the dangers inherent in standardless and defenseless condition of the 'masses.'" Edward Shils, "The Theory of Mass Society," in The Concept of Community, ed. by David W. Minar and Scott Greer (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), p. 299.

[9] Cf. Tebbel. One might expect that the same sort of analysis is being applied to the latest technologies which have become available to "the masses": the silicone chip, from calculators to videogames to the personal computer.

[10] Cf. Denis McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communications (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969), pp. 32-35.

[11] See, e.g., Robert E. Park, On Social Control and Collective Behavior, ed. by R.H. Turner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), particularly the following essays: "The Natural History of the Newspaper," originally written in 1923, pp. 97-113; "News as a Form of Knowledge," originally written in 1940, pp. 32-52; and "Morale and the News," originally written in 1941, pp. 249-267. Another important example is Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Free Press, 1949), originally written in 1922.

[12] The so-called "Payne Fund Studies," named after a private foundation, comprise one of the earliest examples. Attempting to link film content with effects on children, these studies were conducted during the latter 1920s and were published during the 1930s. For a summary, see Shearon Lowery and Melvin L. DeFleur, Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects (New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 31-57.

[13] This stimulus-response manner of thinking about media effects is often labeled the "hypodermic needle model" of mass communication, suggesting the analogy that, just as a syringe directly penetrates the body and affects biochemistry, media messages directly enter the mind and affect behavior. For a discussion of stimulus-response models and their modifications, see Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl, Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communications (New York: Longman, 1981), pp. 42-45.

[14] For an autobiographical account of the beginning of the discipline of mass communication, see Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," in The Intellectual Migration:

Europe and America, 1930-1960, ed. by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1969), pp. 270-337.

For an overview of the role of Lazarsfeld, Hovland, Lewin, and Lasswell in establishing mass communication as a discipline, see Wilbur Schramm, ed., "Communication Research in the United States," in The Science of Human Communication: New Directions and New Findings in Communication Research (New York: Basic Books, 1963), pp. 1-16; and Veikko Pietelä, On the Scientific Status and Position of Communication Research, Monograph No. 35 (Tampere, Finland: Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1977), pp. 7-15.

[15] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," in The Communication of Ideas, ed. by L. Bryson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 32-51; also in Mass Communications, ed. by Wilbur Schramm, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 117-130.

[16] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944).

[17] Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications (New York: Free Press, 1955).

[18] The best example of a model of this version of the process is found in Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Mass Communication Research," Journalism Quarterly, 34 (1957), 31-38. This model has been "widely adopted." Denis McQuail, Communication (New York: Longman, 1975), p. 22.

[19] One analyst, who happens to be an empirical researcher, writes: "The continuous demand for discrete findings about media use and impact militates against any theoretical development, [leading to] the neglect of studies which do not easily fit . . . a cause-effect relationship. . . . Thus, short-term impact studies have predominated over long-term enquiries . . . of structures and institutional patterns which may be markedly affected by the mass media, but for which tools of measurement were unavailable." McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communications, p. 53; see also Smythe for his discussion of the "scientism" entailed by the empirical tradition.

Another analyst suggests that the empirical tradition is a reflection of the status quo in society, and that this is sufficient to prevent empirical researchers from posing challenging problems for investigation; see Herbert I. Schiller, "Waiting for Orders--Some Current Trends in Mass Communications Research in the United States," Gazette, 20 (1974), 11-21. This position suggests to still another analyst that U.S. communication research values quantity of research findings over theoretical variety; see Kaarle Nordenstreng, "Recent Developments in European Communications Theory," Diogenes, 92 (1975), 104-115.

[20] D.D. Runes, ed., Dictionary of Philosophy (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1971), p. 314.

[21] Charles R. Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 114.

[22] See footnote 1.

[23] This is a common scientific pitfall, one warned against by Abraham H. Maslow, "Problem-Centering vs. Means-Centering in Science," Philosophy of Science, 13 (1946), p. 326.

The failure of communication research to heed this warning has been noted by Smythe, "Some Observations"; McQuail (see footnote 19); and Richard W. Budd, "Perspectives on a Discipline: Review and Commentary," Presidential Address to the International Communication Association, in Communication Yearbook I, ed. by Brent D. Ruben (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books and the International Communication Association, 1977), pp. 29-36.

[24] Denis McQuail, "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," in Mass Communication and Society, ed. by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979), pp. 70-94, esp. p. 84.

[25] These levels are developed in Lee Thayer, Communication and Communication Systems (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1968), pp. 30-32.

[26] John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York and London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, Free Press Paperback, 1966), p. 295.

[27] "If we had not talked with others and they with us, we should never talk to and with ourselves." John Dewey, Experience and Nature (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), p. 170.

[28] Thayer, p. 253.

[29] Lee Thayer, "Communication: Sine Qua Non of the Behavioral Sciences," first presented as two lectures before the Air Force Office of Scientific Research 13th Science Seminar, Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 13-14, 1968, reprinted in Interdisciplinary Approaches to Human Communication, ed. by Richard W. Budd and Brent D. Ruben (Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1979), p. 12.

[30] McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communications, pp. 10-11.

[31] Ibid., pp. 7-10.

[32] Ibid., p. 8.

[33] Ibid., p. 10.

[34] Harold Adams Innis, The Bias of Communication (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), especially the essays, "Minerva's Owl," pp. 3-32, and "The Bias of Communication," pp. 33-60.

For his application of his analysis to the growth of empire in Western civilization, see Harold Adams Innis, Empire and Communications, revised by Mary Q. Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), especially Chapter Four, "The Oral Tradition and Greek Civilization," pp. 53-84, and Chapter Five, "The Written Tradition and the Roman Empire," pp. 85-115.

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[35] This thesis first appeared in Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit ["Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere"] (Neuweid: Luchterhand, 1962). An abbreviated translation is available in Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," trans. by S. Lennox and F. Lennox, New German Critique, No. 3 (1974), 49-55.

[36] Tönnies, p. 65.

[37] Cf. Melvin DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication, 2nd ed. (New York: David McKay, 1970).

[38] Cf. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds., Introduction to From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

[39] Habermas, "The Public Sphere," p. 55.

[40] Jürgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. by J. Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 225.

[41] Communication technology, one should recall, has been defined as ". . . all the means by which the functions and ends of communication are served or carried out." Thayer, Communication and Communication Systems, p. 253.

[42] This thesis is developed in Jürgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).

[43] As in, e.g., Innis, Bias of Communication; Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Walter J. Ong, The Presence of the Word (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); and James W. Carey, "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan," in McLuhan: Pro and Con, ed. by R. Rosenthal (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 270-308.

[44] Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "The Industrialization of Mind," Chapter One of The Consciousness Industry (New York: Seabury Press, 1974).

[45] Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," in Critical Theory: Selected Essays, trans. by M.J. O'Connel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 188-243.

[46] E.g., those summarized in Michael E. Roloff, Interpersonal Communication: The Social Exchange Approach (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981).

[47] Cf. McQuail, Communication, pp. 93-137.

[48] Basil Bernstein, Class, Codes, and Control, 3 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, 1973, 1975). See also McQuail, Communication, pp. 93-137.

[49] George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, ed. by C.W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

[50] Ibid., p. 158.

[51] Ibid., p. 157.

[52] See Jürgen Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," Chapter Two of Communication and the Evolution of Society, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979).

[53] Jürgen Habermas, as quoted and translated by Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), p. 343.

[54] This requirement has been noted since the last century in social theory. See Hardt, especially: "Albert Schäffle on Symbolic Communication," pp. 41-74; "The News of Society: Karl Knies on Communication and Transportation," pp. 75-97; and "The Linkage of Society: Karl Bücher on Business and Journalism," pp. 99-131.

Other systems-theoretic arguments in response to the progressive complexity of modern society include: Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control (New York: Free Press, 1966); Thayer, "Sine Qua Non"; and Habermas, Legitimation Crisis.

[55] Thayer, "Sine Qua Non," p. 28.

[56] Habermas, Legitimation Crisis.

[57] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1966); Mead; Sigmund Freud, The Ego and the Id, trans. by Joan Riviere, revised by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1960); Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 204.

[58] Jürgen Habermas, "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence," in Recent Sociology No. 2: Patterns of Communicative Behavior, ed. by H.P. Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 125.

[59] Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York: Warner Books, 1979), p. 76.

[60] Habermas, "Communicative Competence," pp. 115-148; Habermas, "Public Sphere."

[61] See McQuail, Communication, pp. 93-137.

[62] Habermas, "Communicative Competence"; Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Chapter One.

[63] Thayer, "Sine Qua Non," p. 29.

[64] Habermas, "The Public Sphere."

[65] Lasch.

[66] Lasch, pp. 22-23, 103.

[67] Mead; Berger and Luckmann; Dewey, Experience and Nature; Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. by Joan Riviere, revised by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1961).

[68] Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Chapter One.